

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

MARCH 2001

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr



Let's see, I've got my boat ready, cleaned my rod and reels, purchased a few new items and rearranged my tackle. And let's not forget the most important thing, I've purchased my 2001 fishing license. From the sound of things, spring has sprung and it's time to go fishing.

This year promises to be yet another great year of angling experiences. If you don't think we've got it made in Virginia, then read on. Last year the Angler Recognition Program, of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, issued over 6,500 certificates for trophy-sized fish that were caught in Virginia waters and registered with the program. In fact, in the past couple of years we've had a number of scale-busting state records. The Department stocked over 1.2 million trout and 3-5 million warmwater fish, and, if that's not enough, anglers are given the opportunity to fish over 25,000 miles of warmwater streams, 2,300 miles of trout waters, 176,000 acres of lakes and ponds, along with 39 Department public fishing lakes.

Each year, anglers of all ages are being treated to a host of fish-

2001 Governor's Angling Extravaganza

ing events across this wonderful state of ours. From statewide contests to local fishing derbys, the art and sport of fishing is attracting all sorts of attention. One event that is really luring anglers in by the thousands is the Governor's Angling Extravaganza, being held June 1-3, 2001, statewide. Kids fishing clinics, family fishing programs, and three free days of fishing make this the grandest of fishing events in the Old Dominion. If you've never fished before or are a seasoned pro, this is your chance to get involved. Give us a call if you, your business, or group would like to help sponsor an event during this year's Governor's Angling Extravaganza. We also want to hear from you if you are just looking at having even more fun with your angling experiences.



Last year's Governor's Angling Extravaganza offered events throughout the state that included (top) fishing the James River in the City of Richmond and James River State Park, Buckingham County, (above) York River State Park, York County and (bottom) Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

For more information on the Governor's Angling Extravaganza, contact us at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 West Broad St., P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104 or call (804) 367-6778. Web surfers can learn more by contacting the event web site at www.getfishing.state.va.us.

Remember, once you've tried fishing you're hooked for life. "Get Fishing, Virginia!"

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James S. Gilmore III, Governor

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If you are looking for a place to enjoy a day of fishing and boating then check "Public Lakes of Central Virginia," on page 17.

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

Cover: Jefferson salamander (*Ambystoma jeffersonianum*)
©Joe McDonald.

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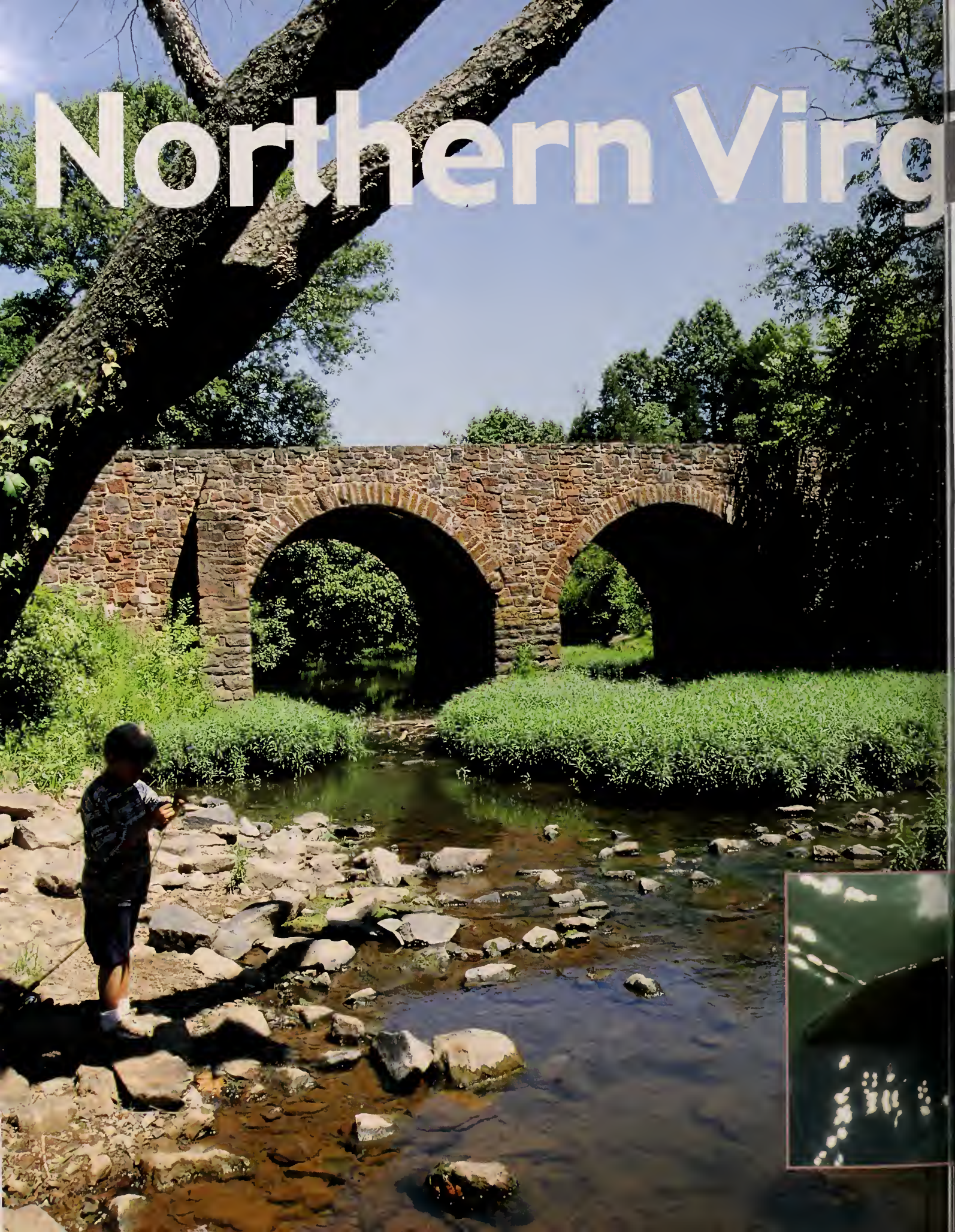
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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

Northern Virg



Virginia's Bull Run

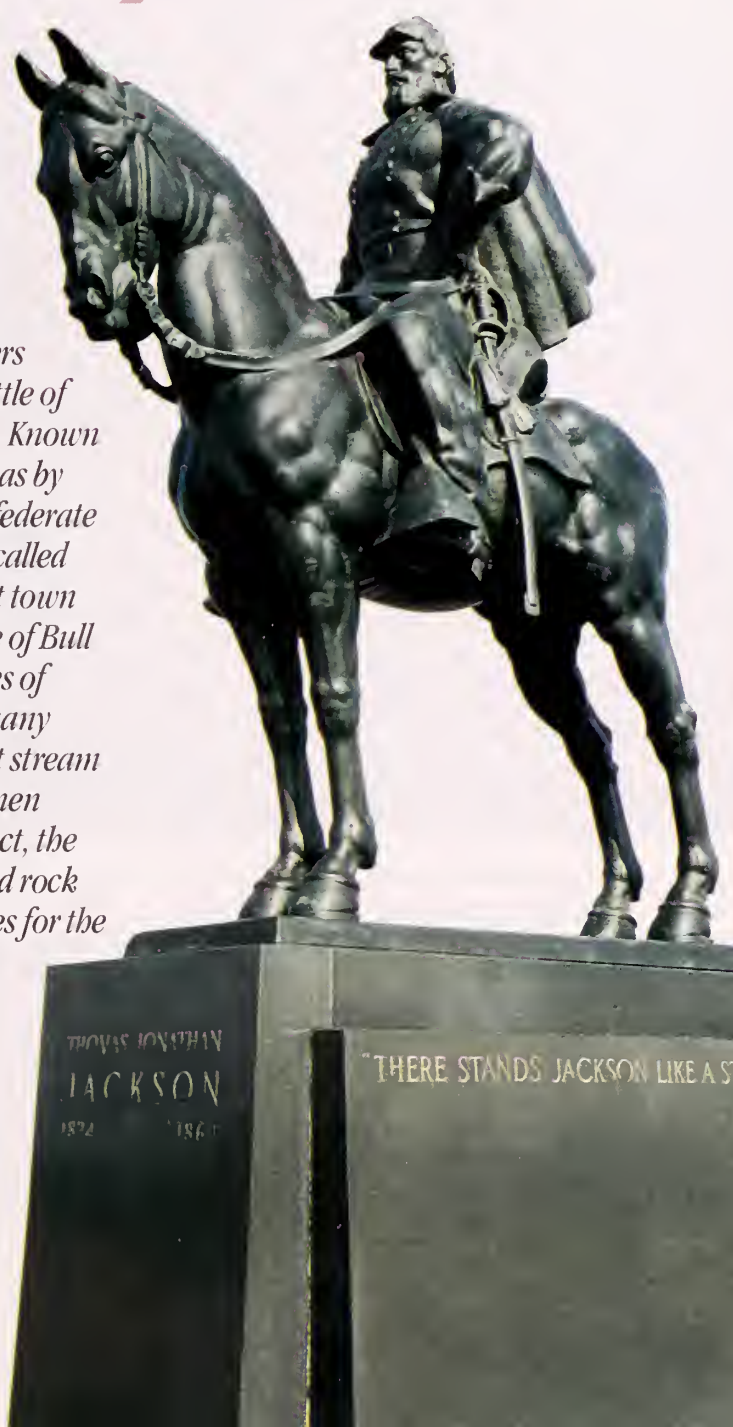
A Run for History.

story & photos by
King Montgomery

The number three fly line swished overhead, the fly rod moving quietly through the air like a magic wand, seeking to conjure fish from the little, scenic creek. The popper landed gently, and I took in the line slack. Just above on the old bridge, a sound, then a series of noises, broke my angling reverie and took me back in time. The soft creaking of the wheels of a baby stroller, in need of oil, seemed like a ghostly echo of a gun carriage rumble or wagon rattling across the bridge. The footsteps of families walking over the historic bridge on a summer day's outing were muted reminders of the stronger steps of soldiers tromping to battle or fleeing in defeat toward Washington, DC, some 26 miles to the east-northeast.

On the afternoon of July 21, 1861, the Stone Bridge on the Warrenton Pike over Bull Run Creek was packed with retreating Union soldiers after the first major battle of the American Civil War. Known as the Battle of Manassas by the newly-formed Confederate States of America who called battles after the nearest town or city and as the Battle of Bull Run by the United States of America who named many battles after the nearest stream or river. Almost 1,000 men would die in this conflict, the first of many that would rock Americans on both sides for the next four bloody years.

Far left: The Stone House Bridge, on the Warrenton Pike over Bull Run, played major rolls in both battles of Bull Run. Today, kids fish under it in the quiet waters. **Left:** A scrappy bluegill taken on a dry fly. **Right:** The General Jackson memorial on Henry Hill, near the Visitors Center at the Manassas National Battlefield.





I was recalled to the world of angling by a familiar “plop,” and instinctively raised the light rod to a scrappy bluegill. Feeling the foreign pressure, the fish performed several vigorous runs before coming to hand. I cradled the bluegill in my wet palm and admired the kaleidoscope of color along its body. After being out of the water a few seconds, the fish darkened and became as drab as a stone. I released it, know-

ing its customary colors would soon return.

I cast again. In the low, fairly clear water, bluegills came often and easy, not always the case with these usually agreeable fish. Occasionally, a small largemouth bass would rise to the popper. They were only 12 inches long or less, but made up in spunk what they lacked in size. Where Bull Run flows along the Manassas National Battlefield Park, defining the

northern and eastern boundaries of the park, it is small water. Later, the stream widens and deepens as it approaches the Occoquan Reservoir, and I knew there were more and larger fish, particularly bass and bluegill, complemented by crappie and catfish. There it mingles with the remnants of the Occoquan River and loses its identity in the reservoir that supplies drinking water to Fairfax County.

Thousands of young men, many in their teens, marched in reasonably-organized formation, some wearing colors as bright as the bluegill red pantaloons, white stockings, brilliant blue jackets, and garish kepis, all adorned with gold or silver piping glinted brightly in the hot July sun. These gaudy colors hastened the demise of many, leaving behind only the pallor of death.



Top: The Stone House on the Warrenton Pike (Route 29) is essentially the same as it was in the early 1860s, when it served as a field hospital for Union forces at the battles of First and Second Manassas.

Left: Bull Run is full of big bluegills, and keeping enough for a meal isn't hard to do.

Bull Run and Little Bull Run begin in the Bull Run Mountains (a term of dubious accuracy to describe 1,000-foot hills). There Bull Run forms the line between Loudoun and Prince William counties and, over much of its course, the stream is also the border between Fairfax and Prince William counties. Fed by Catharpin Creek, Lick Branch Run, Chestnut Lick, and other small creeks, the streams join near the Sudley Post Office at the northern end of the battlefield park. The stream winds generally south around the Bull Run Regional Park, turns east and south to form the limits of the city of Manassas Park, then flows through wooded hills and housing developments before it joins the reservoir and leaves its history behind.

At the Bull Run Marina, right before the river joins the Occoquan Reservoir, the creek is several hundred feet across. You can fish from the shore here, launch your own canoe or small boat, or rent one from the concession in the park. I have run the stream from the Occoquan Reservoir northwestwards until my 14-foot aluminum johnboat (with a 10-horsepower motor) could go no further, and caught fish all along the way. I didn't see many people, even though some of my trips were on weekend days. It's nice to have some solitude and uncrowded fishing in a major metropolitan area. Fly fishing and light spinning tackle are the best.

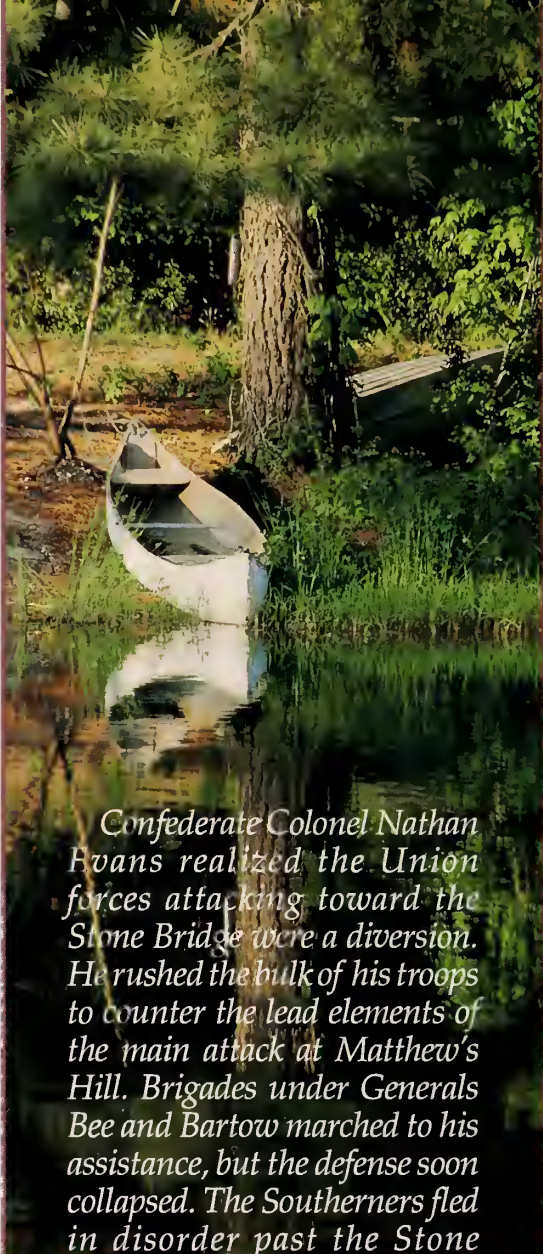
A light spinning rod with 4-6 pound test monofilament line is adequate for most of the fish in Bull Run. For bass, I use 4-inch plastic worms and 2-3 inch plastic grubs; color doesn't seem to matter much, but I like darker lures and chartreuse in the brown waters. In-line Mepps, Panther Martin, and similar spinners in small sizes take bluegill and crappie, and largemouth bass, the occasional catfish take the larger size spinners. (There are some huge catfish in the stream near the reservoir and in the reservoir itself. Use cut-or

stink-bait and heavier casting or spinning tackle for these brutes.)

A 7-9 foot fly rod for a 2-4 weight line will tame most fish you're apt to encounter. I'll use a 6-8-weight line for larger bass in the reservoir. Most of the time a weight-forward floating line is fine, but a sinking-tip or full-sinking line might be needed when the fish are deeper and seem to have lockjaw. Keep leaders simple: start with a 7 or 9 foot knotless tapered leader and change the 4-6 pound test tippet as needed. In the battlefield park, where the fish are smaller, a 2-4 pound test tippet will work well. (When fishing on National Park Service property, you'll need to purchase a daily ticket (\$2) or annual pass (\$15) at the Park's Visitors Center or from one of the patrolling Park rangers. You also need a freshwater fishing license.)

Today, Northern Virginia is at peace, and Bull Run has healed from the battles, including Second Manassas a year after the first encounter, and numerous smaller skirmishes and fire-fights. The struggle now is to deal with the onslaught of progress that threatens what little green is left on the once verdant hills. Some natural places remain in this increasingly developed Washington suburb, mostly in Manassas Battlefield National Park, the Bull Run Regional Park, run by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA), and the Bull Run Marina, which is administered by George Mason University in partnership with the NVRPA. Who will win this battle for precious historical and natural terrain is not clear.

The **Manassas National Battlefield Park** is laced with driving and walking trails to various sites on the battlefield, including the Stone House, and the Stone Bridge on the Warrenton Turn-



Confederate Colonel Nathan Evans realized the Union forces attacking toward the Stone Bridge were a diversion. He rushed the bulk of his troops to counter the lead elements of the main attack at Matthew's Hill. Brigades under Generals Bee and Bartow marched to his assistance, but the defense soon collapsed. The Southerners fled in disorder past the Stone House on the Warrenton Turnpike to Henry Hill. There, General Tom Jackson's Virginia brigade formed a disciplined line, and with Jackson sitting calmly on his horse, faced the advancing enemy. Bee shouted, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians." Lines formed, weapons raised, and the Confederates won the day. This was the first episode in a series of the distinguished military exploits for "Stonewall" Jackson and the Virginia regiments of his Stonewall Brigade.

pike (Route 29). The Visitors Center is located on Henry Hill; nearby stands a huge statue of General Stonewall Jackson sitting astride his horse and gazing across at the terrain where the Federal forces advanced. The Park has a full schedule of events, both inside and outdoors. Additionally, the Park is home to numerous animals and birds that, although somewhat habituated to people, are still wild and beautiful. In the spring and summer, wildflowers cover the fields and gently-rolling hills. Bring a camera or sketchbook when you visit Bull Run. You may want to check their Web site at www.nps.gov/mana or call (703) 361-1339 for more information and directions.

Bull Run Regional Park offers camping, picnicking, an outdoor swimming pool, miniature and Frisbee golf, bridle paths, historic nature and hiking trails, and soccer fields. The park has a Public Shooting Center, which is open all year and offers sporting clays, trap, skeet, and archery ranges. For more information, see their Web site at www.nvrpa.org or call (703) 631-0550 or the NVRPA headquarters at (703) 352-5900.

Bull Run Marina has a boat launching ramp, boat and canoe rentals, picnic areas, an outdoor learning center, hiking and horse trails, and soccer fields. The park has a concession for food and drinks, and it hosts numerous in-season, outdoor activities including guided canoe trips in-season. The fishing here is excellent. The marina is listed at www.nvrpa.org or call (703) 631-0549. □

King Montgomery is a retired Army infantry officer who lives in Annandale. He is an award-winning outdoor writer/photographer and a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

Above: The scenic waters of Bull Run make it a perfect getaway.

A man is sitting in a boat, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a white baseball cap with "Southern Division Fishermen's Society" and "EST. 1958" printed on it. He has dark sunglasses and is wearing a red and blue plaid shirt under a teal Cabela's fishing vest. He is holding a small, yellowish-green sunfish with both hands. A fishing rod is visible in the background. The background shows a wooded area with trees having yellow and orange autumn leaves.

Three Ways for Springtime Sunfish

by Gerald Almy

Easy to catch and great to eat make fishing for these scrappy fighters an anglers delight.

When dogwoods blossom on the shoreline, Canada geese guard their nests, and ruffed grouse fan the air on their drumming logs, angling reaches a fevered pitch throughout the Old Dominion. But in your rush to try the fabulous fishing for big time species like largemouth, smallmouth, stripers, and trout, don't forget the humble "bream." Bluegill and redear sunfish are swarming in the shallows, feeding heavily, and preparing to spawn. There's no finer time to seek out these brightly painted, hard-fighting fish than now, when they're schooled up near shore, enacting the rites of spring.

Bluegills are a prolific fish species, so you don't need to feel guilty about taking a few home for a tasty meal. They're also, with the right gear and tactics, fairly easy to lure to the hook. You can often count your catch in the dozens on a good spring outing, keeping a few for a meal and releasing the rest.

The fact that bluegills are not hard to catch also makes them a great quarry for introducing novices to fishing—whether they're young or old.

Finally, these fish are easy to find.

They're abundant throughout Vir-

ginia and can be caught in waters ranging from half-acre farm ponds to huge impoundments that span thousands of acres. They're available in many creeks and slow-moving rivers throughout the state. Medium-sized lakes, including many Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) owned waters, are also good bets for the cooperative sunfish.

Bluegill tend to attract "specialist" fishermen. One will be an expert with live bait, another an ultralight lure fanatic, still another a fly fishing purist who tosses sponge rubber spiders on fine-diameter tippets. The fact is each of these techniques will fool both bluegill and shell-cracker in the spring. I like to use all



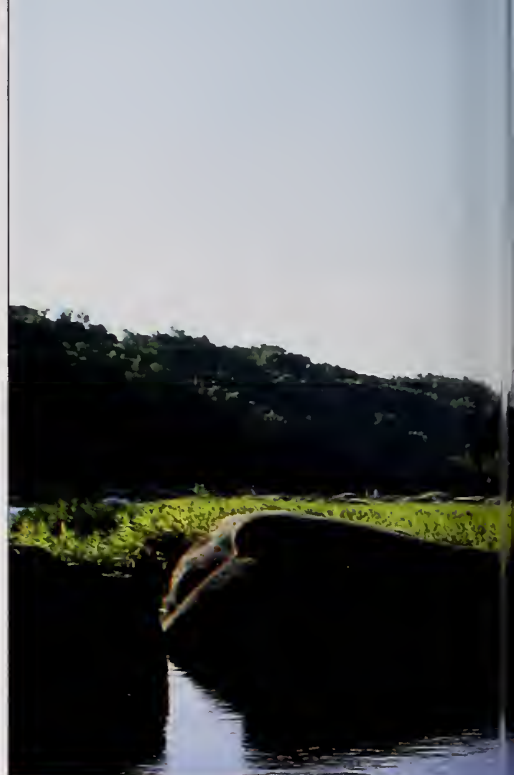
© Dwight Dyke

three methods, both for variety and because, at times, one tactic will out produce the other.

Live Bait

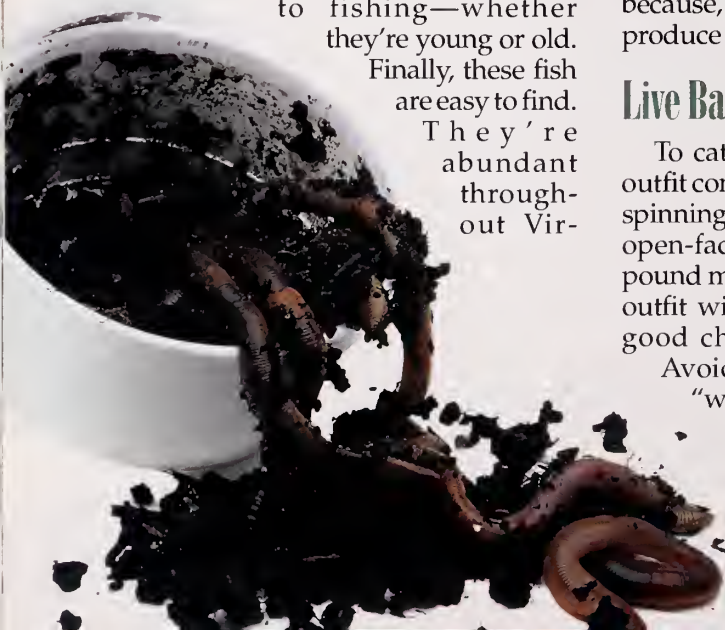
To catch bluegill on bait a good outfit consists of a light or ultralight-spinning rod of 5-7 feet and small, open-faced reel spooled with 4-6 pound monofilament. A spincasting outfit will also work well and is a good choice for young anglers.

Avoid getting a rod that's too "whippy" or soft actioned.



© Dwight Dyke

No matter if they're bluegill, redbreast, pumpkinseed, or redear—fishing for sunfish is a great way to spend time on the water.





Besides this outfit you'll need a bag or two of small split shot, size 6-8 long-shank, fine wire hooks, and several small floats. You can use regular round bobbers, but cylindrical shaped ones are more efficient and respond more quickly to biting fish, dipping at the slightest nibble.

Top offerings for spring shell-crackers are earthworms, red wigglers, or a piece of a nightcrawler. These are also excellent for bluegills, almost as good as crickets, and the number one offering. Adjust the float so the bait hovers a few inches off the bottom, with one or two split

shot crimped a foot up the line for weight.

Cast this rig out to beds you've spotted or areas where you've smelled fish (something like ripe melons). If you can't locate fish on beds, cast to likely cover or places where you've caught bluegills be-



fore. Fish often grab these offerings greedily when you make your first few deliveries. After a while, though, they'll grow more cautious. Finally you'll reach a point where it's best to pull back and find another spot for a while. If you rest them 30–45 minutes, you can come back and the fish will respond enthusiastically again.

Lures

The same light or ultralight spinning outfit you use for bait will serve double duty for tossing lures to bluegill and redear. As a rule, choose light over ultralight action rods. You need some flex in the tip, but the rest of the rod should have a bit of backbone for setting the hook. Line weight of 4 pound test is a good all-around choice, but don't hesitate to go down to 2 if the fish are extra skit-

tish or up to 6 if there are lots of snags present.

Lure fishing can be good anytime for bluegill, but it's particularly useful in two situations. One is when the fish are in the shallows feeding and getting ready to spawn. The second time is when they are spawning in deep or dingy water. They're less effective when the panfish are hov-

ering over beds in thin, clear water.

Small spinners, spoons, spinnerbaits, and miniature crankbaits can all be effective on either pre-spawn bluegill hovering in backwaters and coves or on fish mating in 3–6 feet of water. Cast and retrieve them as slowly as you can, and chances are you'll pick up a number of aggressive fish this way, particularly males.

Of all lures available for spring panfish, though, none can top the humble grub. A tiny leadhead of $\frac{1}{32}$ – $\frac{1}{8}$ ounce with a soft plastic body is effective on both pre-spawn and bedding fish. Curly-tail versions work at times, but, as a rule, shorter, compact versions with stiff, stubby tails and less action are usually best. Cast and retrieve these as slowly as you can near spotted fish or promising areas. Pause occasionally during





fit can serve double duty for small-mouth and trout as well. Use a light, single-action reel, a weight-forward line, and 7–9 foot leader tapered down to a 3–4 pound tippet.

Trout flies work well on sunfish. I've had excellent luck with patterns, such as the Humpy, Adams, Stimulator, Irresistible, and various terrestrials in sizes 10–14. When fish are slightly deeper or reluctant to rise to the surface, a small buggy-looking nymph or wet fly is a productive choice. Bead-head patterns are particularly good.

As a rule, though, you can usually leave the trout flies in an "if needed" box and simply tie a sponge rubber spider to the end of your tippet, in size 8–12. Green, black, yellow, white, and red are all top colors. When action slows a bit or if fish are hovering in deeper water, crimp a very small split shot on the line a foot or so in front of the fly. Then work the sponge offering back with a slow, hand-twist retrieve 3–4 feet deep.

When you're presenting these flies or trout patterns on top, it's important not to move them too often or too forcefully. In fact, you could probably just cast these offerings out and wait, then recast and catch plenty of fish. It's hard to resist trying at least one twitch or two, though. Just wait as long as you can before you do it, then make the motion as subtle as possible. Twitch the fly twice at most, then recast to a new location, which could be just a few feet away.

A bluegill won't pull like a 15-pound striper or challenge you like a wary, native trout, but heck, they offer plenty of other attractions. They're plentiful, good to eat, under harvested, tough fighters on light tackle and willing to take lures, flies, or bait with equal abandon. That's a combination that's hard to beat for springtime fishing fun. □

Gerald Almy is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife and a field editor for Sports Afield magazine.



Keep it small and simple when fishing for sunfish. These scrappy fighters will latch on to just about anything you throw at them. Photos ©Dwight Dyke.

your retrieve to let the lure drop back deeper. Fish often strike at this time. Takes will be delicate, almost imperceptible at times, so set the hook at the slightest different feel as you work the lure back.

When action slows, as it inevitably will, snap a small float on the line so the lure suspends at the fish's level and let it hover motionless over the beds. That's usually too much for the protective bream to take. They'll smack it with a vengeance!

Flies

Spring is a great time to take bluegills on a fly rod. When the fish move into the shallows to feed, fan out their circular beds, and breed, they're in the perfect zone for the fly fisherman. A rod of 8–9 feet with a 4–7-weight line is perfect, and this out-



Early Season Dry Fly Trout Angling

by Harry Murray

Learn some top-water tactics that will tantalize the most transfixed trout.



Brook Trout (Salvelinus fontinalis).

W

e all know that "Virginia is for Lovers" and the serious trout angler joyfully carries this one step further. He knows Virginia is for lovers of dry fly trout fishing.

By March, when most anglers start thinking about trout fishing, our streams are warm enough to spark the trout to feed. Even more important to many anglers is the fact that at this time the hatches of our aquatic insects are beginning. This combination of water temperatures conducive for active trout feeding and the abundance of natural aquatic insects has our trout looking up to the stream surfaces for their food.

This is where we come onto the scene with our dry flies and floating fly lines to attempt to catch the trout.

In order to take advantage of this fine action, let's look at the tactics which are effective early in the season, the major aquatic insect hatches, and some of the streams which fish well early in the year.

Let's assume you go to the same stream you fished the previous year, on your first trip in the middle of March when you had such outstanding dry fly fishing. Much to your amazement you find the stream much higher than you expected. You would really like to fish dry flies, but you doubt that the trout could even see them in all that



March brown mayflies excite both the trout and the anglers with their appearance in early spring. In many pools one may locate several trout feeding actively upon the emerging flies.
Photos ©Harry Murray.

racing water. So, what do you do? Here are two tactics I've used with good success over the years.

Your first option is to get back in your car and drive to a location in the very headwater of this or another stream. This is quite easy to do in Virginia for we have many fine scenic roads, such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, the National Forest mountain roads in the western part of the state, and the Skyline Drive, all of which provide excellent access to trails which will take you to the

upper reaches of our mountain streams.

Your second option, and one I often use to save time, is to simply hike up the trail beside the stream you started on. You'll notice as you ascend the mountain that you are crossing many small feeder streams and wet weather hollows, all of which contributed to the full stream you saw at the bottom of the mountain. A hike of one hour will probably put you onto a fishable water level and two hours climbing is a

surefire way to give you good dry fly fishing.

Now that we're on the stream let's explore some of the most productive early season, dry fly tactics.

Our most effective techniques will be those which dovetail with the feeding habits of the trout. Since the trout in headwater streams need all of the food they can get they will locate quite close to a good current flow. However, they will locate in front of or beside some boulder to block the main force of the current. The lower reaches of many pools often contain such boulders and it is a simple matter to sneak in below these boulders and drift a dry fly in front of them to take a nice trout.

When I started identifying and cataloging our aquatic insects in the early 70s, I quickly realized that the quill gordon (*Epeous pleuralis*) is our

continued on page 21.

Public Lakes of Central Virginia



Enjoy the great outdoors among the many public lakes of Central Virginia.

Central Virginia is blessed with many public lakes. A total of 26 lakes and several small ponds are available, many of which are conveniently located in county or city parks. Urban areas along the fall-line, such as Richmond and the Tri-cities of Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg offer a number of public lakes. In Charlottesville and Albemarle

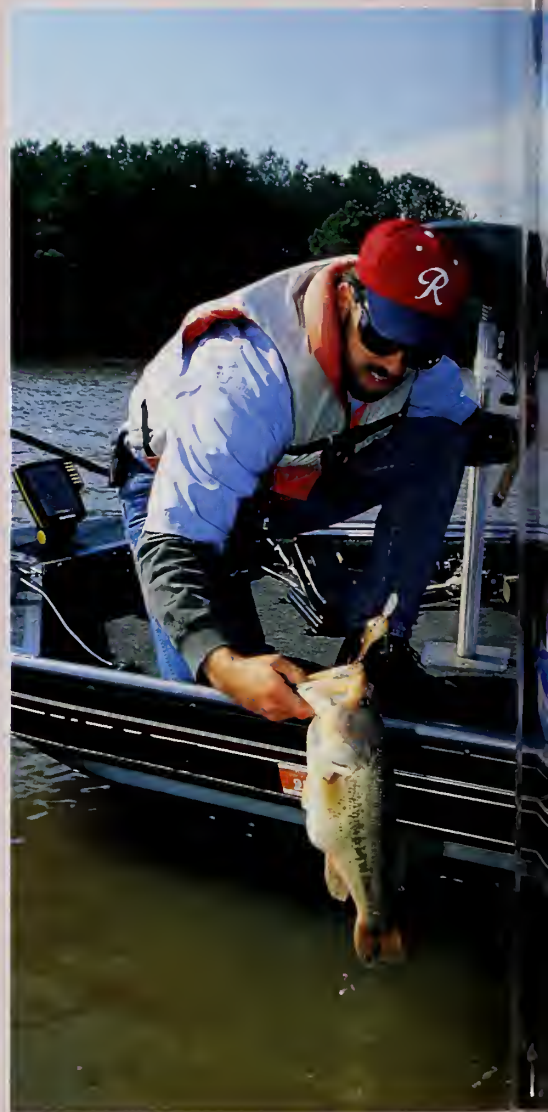
*From the fall-line to
the Blue Ridge
Mountains, angling
opportunities
abound.*



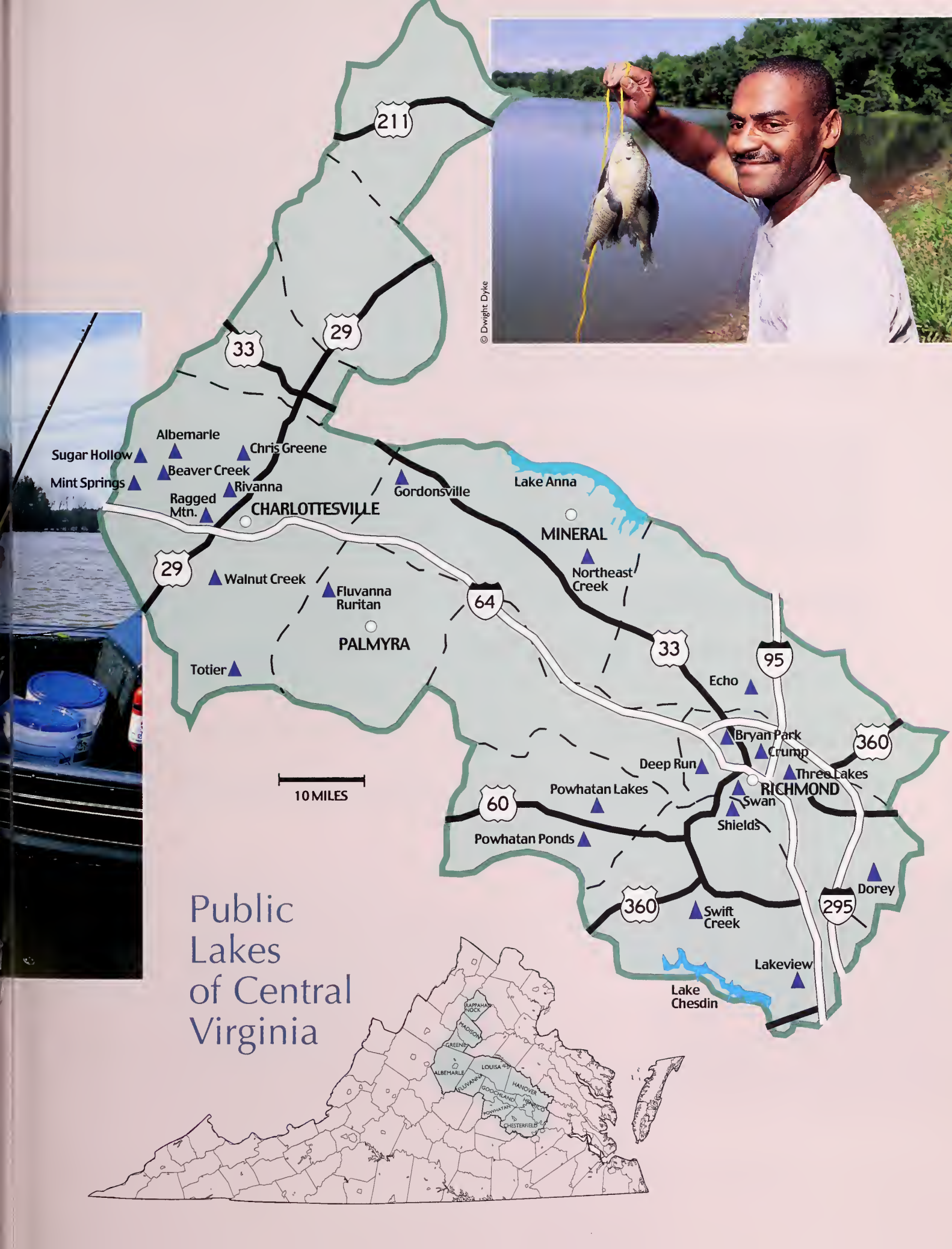
County, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, lakes abound offering the angler a variety of opportunities to fish. Large reservoirs, such as Lake Anna and Chesdin, offer a variety of trophy fish species, from striped bass and walleye to the much sought after largemouth bass. Trout are also stocked in several lakes. In central Virginia

there is a diversity and abundance of fishing opportunities.

Public lakes for Central Virginia are listed on the following two pages, with fish species, directions, services available, and a map. Enjoy the many fishing resources available in Central Virginia—an experience to last a lifetime.



Left: Small lakes, like Deep Run Park in Henrico County, offer easy access and a variety of angling opportunities. **Above:** Over the past few years Lake Chesdin has gained a reputation of producing lunker largemouth bass. Photos ©Dwight Dyke.



Central Virginia

Lake, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	CF	TR	CRP	SB	CP	WE
Albemarle Parks Dept. Lakes														
Beaver Creek (104 ac) Follow 680 from Rt. 250 junction west of Charlottesville to lake.		•						•	•		•			
Chris Greene (62 ac) On Rt. 606 one mile from airport	Fee	•	•,SW		Canoe	•		•	•		•			
Mint Springs (8 ac) Rt. 684-788 west of Crozet	Fee		•,SW					•	•		•			
Totier Creek (66 ac) Rt. 6-726 W of Scottsville		•	•					•	•		•			
Walnut Creek (60 ac) on Rt. 631 south of Charlottesville	Fee	•	•,SW			•		•	•		•			
Bryan Park Lakes (12 ac) Richmond, Hermitage Rd/Lakeside Ave. to Bryan Park			•			•		•	•					
Chesdin (3,100 ac) I-95 S to I-85 S to Rt. 460 W to Rt. 623 N to Rt. 601 W to Rt. 776 N		•		•				•	•		•	•	•	•
Gordonsville (81 ac) I-64 W to Rt. 15 Boswell Tavern to Rt. 603.	•	•						•	•		•			
Henrico County Park Lakes														
Crump Park (2 ac) Staples Mill Rd. (33 W) to Courtney Road.			•			•		•	•					
Deep Run Park (2) (2 ac) I-64 to S. Gaskins Rd. to Ridgefield Drive.			•			•		•	•					
Dorey Park (5 ac) Off Darbytown Rd.			•			•		•	•	•	•			
Echo (12 ac) Rt. 33 W to Rt. 157.			•			•		•	•		•			
Three Lakes Park (3) (4 ac) off Rt. 301 N to Wilkerson Rd.			•			•		•	•					
Lakeview (42 ac) Rt. 1 to Pickett St.		•	•					•	•		•			
Northeast Creek (175 ac) 4 miles east of Louisa on Rt. 33	•	•						•	•		•		•	
Ragged Mountain (50 ac) Rt. 702 off Rt. 29	•							•	•		•			
Rivanna (450 ac) Rt. 659 off 631 (Rio Rd)		•						•	•		•			
Sugar Hollow Res. (47 ac) On Moorman's River 6 mi. west of White Hall on on Rt. 614. No boats allowed.										•				
Shields (7 ac) In Byrd Park in Richmond, VA			•			•		•	•	•				
Swan (13 ac) In Byrd Park in Richmond, VA			•			•		•	•					
Swift Creek (156 ac) Pocahontas State Park Rt. 10 to Rt. 655 (Beach Rd) to Rt. 780.		•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	
Va. Dept of Game & Inland Fisheries' Lakes														
Albemarle (35 ac) In White Hall take Rt. 614 E. to Rt. 675. Right on Rt. 675, follow to lake		•						•	•		•			
Fluvanna Ruritan (50 ac) On Rt. 619 off Rt. 58 at Cunningham.		•						•	•		•			
Lower/Upper Powhatan (66 ac) Rt. 60 W. to 684 to 625 W		•						•	•		•			
Powhatan Ponds (3) (20 ac) Powhatan County Rt. 60 W to Rt. 627 to Rt. 662								•	•		•			

Key

NF - National Forest Stamp
PR - Primitive Ramp
SW - Swimming

Fee - Fee available at lakes
FP - Fishing Pier

LMB /BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
CF - Catfish
TR - Trout
CRP - Crappie

SB - Striped Bass
CP - Chain Pickerel
WE - Walleye



For more information contact:
VDGIF
12108 Washington Highway
Ashland, VA 23005
804/752-5503
www.dgif.state.va.us

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries



continued from page 16

first large mayfly. The trout in the lower reaches of the pools seem to be holding there just waiting for these mayflies, and they are easy to take on a size 14 Mr. Rapidan dry fly.

By the latter part of March our streams are slightly lower and the trout have become accustomed to feeding on natural insects on the surface. Then along comes the hatch of the little blue quill mayflies (*Paraleptophlebia adoptive*), which on many of our streams are our densest hatch. The trout go into a feeding frenzy on these flies and the fishing is outstanding. By now the back eddies on the sides of the pools are favorite feeding stations for the trout. I've hit cool days when the little blue quills were so lethargic that they could not make their normal fast getaway from the stream's surface, and flotillas of dozens of them would drift around and around in these back eddies. Each area would hold several large trout sipping in the helpless mayflies. Drifting a size 16 Blue Quill Dry Fly over these feeding trout is a dependable way to take them.

In the middle of April the much admired March brown mayflies

Over 20 years ago the author designed the Mr. Rapidan dry fly for trout fishing early in the season here in Virginia, and it is now used throughout the country.

Photo ©Harry Murray.





(*Stenonema vicarium*) begin hatching. Not only is this our largest dependable mayfly, but often the density of this hatch rivals that of the blue quills. This is the last of the early season mayfly hatches for the March browns can be on the water well into May.

Our dry fly fishing is now at its peak because, in addition to the size and numbers of the March browns, nature presents the trout with a real smorgasbord. Often many quill gordons and blue quills overlap the March browns and many streams have good olive caddisfly hatches now as well. My favorite flies to use at this time are the Mr. Rapidan size 14 and the March Brown size 14.

The two tactics discussed earlier still work quite well, but now we have many other options because the streams are usually at perfect levels from the middle of April into the middle of May. The trout will now hold along the edges of the main flows in the middle of the pools and beside the riffles in the heads of the pools. In fact, it is not at all unusual to take one trout in the tail of a pool on a dry, a second one in mid-pool, and a third one in the head of the pool.

This increased feeding activity often causes the trout to give away their holding positions because, if we watch closely as we approach a pool, we may see several rise forms as the trout come to the surface to sip in natural insects drifting on the water. Once I spot a feeding trout I cautiously move into a casting position, which will enable me to drift my dry fly over

him in a natural manner on my first cast. If I do not see any rising trout I carefully look over the whole pool to see if I can spot any trout on feeding stations. If I do, I go one on one with these fish. If I do not spot a rise form or see a specific trout I simply drift my dry flies over those spots in the pool that I suspect will hold feeding trout.

You can now see why many anglers feel that Virginia is for lovers of dry fly trout fishing.

In order to locate streams which fish well with dry flies early in the season, you can hardly go wrong by going into the headwaters of many from the Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park. Some of the popular streams include East Hawksbill Creek, Paine Run, and Big Run in the Shenandoah National Park, Big Wilson and Little Wilson Creeks in Grayson County; Stewarts Creek in Carroll County; the upper reaches of the South Fork of the Holston River in Smyth County, and the upper part of Whitetop Laurel in Washington County. □

Harry Murray is one of Virginia's leading authorities on fly fishing in the Old Dominion. Each year he educates thousands of people through his fly fishing articles and classes.

The new book, *Virginia's Blue Ribbon Streams*, by Harry W. Murray, provides extensive information on most of the best trout and smallmouth streams in the Old Dominion. It is available from the Shenandoah Publishing Company, P. O. Box 156, Edinburg VA 22824 or phone 540-984-4212.

Slithering Salamanders

by Carol Heiser and Sally Mills
illustrations by Spike Knuth



Right about this time of year, an incredible movement is underfoot throughout Virginia. While many of us are wistfully thinking about spring's thaw, thousands of colorful salamanders are making their way across the forest floor to *vernal* (springtime), temporary pools of water. Here at night during the first spring rains, they come to start new life in a ritual that's been performed for some 330 million years.

Wild in the woods



Previous page: Marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*). *Above:* Slimy salamander (*Plethodon glutinosus*) and *left:* spring salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*).



Salamanders are a unique type of amphibian that rely heavily upon water to function. Like frogs and other amphibians, salamanders can breathe through their thin, moist skin—converting oxygen into carbon dioxide. This feature makes them extremely sensitive to pollution, as toxins in water can be introduced through the skin membrane. Biologists, therefore, consider the presence of salamanders an important signal, or *indicator*, of a healthy ecosystem.

The 49 species of salamanders found in Virginia can be roughly divided into two groups according to their breeding strategy. Those inclined toward streamside habitats include the genus *Ambystoma* which breed only in water. Others, of the genus *Plethodon*, prefer terrestrial habitats and lay their eggs in or under logs or in the moist leaf litter of the forest floor.

Streamside Inhabitants

The spotted salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*) sports yellow to orange spots in uneven lines along its slate-black body. Growing to 9.5 inches in length, it is a common resident throughout most of Virginia except on the Eastern Shore and parts of Tidewater. You are most likely to encounter it during early spring (February-March) when it emerges from underground to breed in pools, swamps, roadside ditches, and flooded tire tracks. During mating, the male deposits spermatophore in shallow water or below the rocks in a slow-moving creek. The mass is picked up by the female to be fertil-

ized, and the jelly-like egg cluster is then left clinging to underwater plant stalks or twigs.

Biologists believe that *Ambystomae* salamanders developed this adaptation to breed in spring pools because these aquatic havens contain no fish which would prey on the larvae. The larvae are born and live in these temporary wet nurseries for several months, looking much like their parents but breathing through exterior gills. As they *metamorphose*, or change into adults, they lose the gills and acquire lungs for breathing. At this point, spotted salamanders become land-bound and move into bottomland forests, living primarily underground and dining on insects, worms, and mites. Other streamside species in Virginia include the northern two-lined, the Jefferson, and the marbled salamander.

showcases a red stripe down its back and a salt and pepper pattern on its belly. It seeks moist areas of the forest floor to live and to breed, spending most of its time underground. In contrast to their streamside counterparts, terrestrial salamanders like the red-backed do not have larvae. Instead, all larval development occurs within the egg, and the young are born fully mature.

Look for red-backed salamanders on warm, rainy, or foggy nights in spring and fall when they are actively searching for a mate above ground. They are 2-5 inches long. Otherwise, you'll have to peek under rocks and logs to spot them. Sharing the forest with the red-backed are other terrestrial species—the dusky, seal, and slimy salamanders, for example.

Terrestrial Inhabitants

Another completely different assemblage of salamanders are the *Plethodons*, known collectively as terrestrial salamanders. Unlike streamside salamanders, the terrestrial salamanders do not need water for reproduction and live their entire lives in hardwood forests. They also have no lungs, which means that all of their respiration is through the skin or the lining of the mouth. Moisture is therefore critical to their ability to breathe, and during droughty periods they will tunnel deeper into the soil column.

The red-backed salamander (*Plethodon cinereus*) is a common member of this group. As its name implies, this salamander

Right: Salamander egg mass and salamander larvae (below).





Left: Red salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber*) and **bottom:** dusky salamander (*Desmognathus fuscus*).

Suitable Habitat is Critical

Salamanders depend solely upon healthy forests and good water quality to live and to breed. Threats to their continued survival revolve around forest clearing and the draining and filling of wet soils, often for commercial or residential uses, as well as a reduction in water quality. Of the 49 species in Virginia, six are considered state threatened or endangered, and three more are of federal concern.

Biologists, like Don Schwab with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, study salamanders and other amphibians and continue to monitor their health. They do this by a method known as mark and recapture, in which they capture, mark and release adults, then return to the study site to recapture the same animals and compare their observations.

Did You Know?

Salamander eyes do not move but remain fixed in their sockets. For this reason, salamanders ignore stationary objects and rely on movement to find and capture their prey.

Lore

Cold, slimy skin and unusual colors once led people to believe that salamanders are highly poisonous, but they are not. One particular superstition, noted by naturalist Laura Martin in *Wildlife Folklore*, held that salamanders could wrap themselves around a fruit tree's trunk and poison all the fruit on its limbs—killing any unsuspecting soul who ate from it.

Finding Salamanders: Simple Techniques Used 'Round the World

Salamanders can be quite elusive, and biologists use various survey techniques to monitor the different species, keeping tabs on population trends and making note of changes associated with habitat loss. In order to ensure that everyone is collecting their data in the same way (which means that the data can be compared from region to region, state to state, or even between countries), scientists have developed a stan-

dard methodology or *protocol* for how the monitoring is done.

For example, they might lay **coverboards** in a forest. These are 12" x 12" plywood boards that are laid out on an imaginary grid so they are spaced equally apart, then left undisturbed until they are periodically checked to see what might have crawled underneath. Each animal is then identified, sexed, measured, weighed, and marked. Another method is an **egg mass survey**, a census or count of all the egg masses within a standard distance around the margin of a wetland. Or they might lay a **transect** (a straight line) down the middle of a small stream or along the forest floor, sampling at equidistant points under the rocks or the leaf litter.

A simple method you might try in a creek around your home or school to see what salamanders are in your area is a **leaf litter bag**. This is a 50 centimeter square piece of plastic netting with a mesh size of 32-38 mm used to form a bag. You put a few small rocks, decomposing leaves and moss in the bag, and secure the top with a plastic twist tie. Then place the litter bag in the stream by anchoring it with rocks, and leave it for a day. When you come back to check the bag, remove it quickly and hold it over a flat, white pan or container before all the water drains out of it, or any juvenile salamanders in the bag will escape.

More details about these and other scientific sampling techniques can be found in the 56-page spiral bound booklet *Amphibian Monitoring Methods and Field Guide*, by Joseph C. Mitchell, published in



2000 by Smithsonian. The Smithsonian's Conservation Research Center offers teacher workshops in amphibian monitoring at their facility in Front Royal. To contact them, write to Smithsonian CRC, 1500 Remount Rd., Front Royal, VA 22630 or call their Education Office at (540) 635-6540.

Learning More...

Let's Hear it for Herps! This 94-page softcover booklet from the *Ranger Rick Nature Scope* series, produced by the National Wildlife Federation, has been recently expanded. Geared for teachers of grades K-7, it contains background information and activities on reptiles and amphibians and features their trademark "Copycat Pages" for students. The \$12.95 booklet is distributed through McGraw-Hill at www.books.mcgraw-hill.com, or contact your local bookstore.

Visit These Web Sites

North American Amphibian Monitoring Program (NAAMP) at www.im.nbs.gov/amphibs.html. The NAAMP is a collaboration of many partner agencies and citizen volunteers who conduct surveys and collect data on the distribution and relative abundance of frogs, toads, and salamanders. Their Terrestrial Salamander Monitoring Program (www.mp1-pwrc.usgs.gov/sally/) has detailed but easy-to-read procedures for using coverboards.

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) at www.parcplace.org. This is a multi-sector partnership that promotes the conservation of reptiles, amphibians, and their habitats. The Web site includes a Student Partners page (SPARC), which highlights one school's herpetology curriculum.

Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Amphibian Monitoring Page at www.mp1-pwrc.usgs.gov/amphibian_monitoring.html has information on salamander monitoring in Shenandoah National Park.

Sally Mills is an outdoor writer and editor for Virginia Sea Grant at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Carol Heiser is a Wildlife Education Specialist and coordinates the WILD School Sites program at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

Virginia Naturally

Below: Red-backed salamander (Plethodon cinereus)





© Dwight Dyke

Kid's Fishing Day on the Robinson River

A Madison County tradition is helping to create a picture-perfect day for hundreds of young anglers.



© Dwight Dyke

Beautiful scenery, great fishing, and a place to get your feet wet combine to make the perfect kid's-day-out.

This year's kids-only fishing day will be held for the first time on the Robinson River in Syria, Virginia, just across from the Rose River, and it is scheduled to last all day on Saturday, March 17, 2001. The event is sponsored by the Rapidan Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Graves family of Graves Mountain Lodge. Anglers 12 and under (accompanied by an adult) can fish for brook and rainbow trout in the crisp waters flowing from the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Department will stock the river with both trout species before the event, improving each child's chances for landing a trophy.

The children do not have to be experts nor do they need fancy equipment. For many, it will be their first fishing experience, and that's part of the magic; to introduce youngsters to fishing with adult encouragement and guidance, but without adult competition.

By the start of last year's event, scores of eager children had already staked out positions along the mile or so of stream bank restricted to



© Ralph McDowell

young fishers, so those planning to attend this year's Kid's Day should plan accordingly. Remember too, March weather can be nippy, so bring appropriate clothing. For additional information, contact Hank or Marcia Woolman of Trout Unlimited at (540) 253-5545 or Graves Mountain Lodge at (540) 923-4231.

Ralph McDowell is an environmental consultant and freelance writer.

by Ralph McDowell

Carefully combine the future with the past. Add liberal amounts of enthusiasm and anticipation, set the mix at the base of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and flow an idyllic mountain stream through the middle. If traditional magic holds true, you've just brewed up the 22nd Annual Kid's Fishing Day, on the Robinson River.



Journal

Game Warden-of-the-Year

by Julia Dixon Smith

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) announced that the agency's Game Warden-of-the-Year is Steven M. Shires. Officer Shires joined the Department in 1983 and is currently assigned to Rockbridge County. Throughout his career with VDGIF, Shires has received extensive training and has become an instructor for the agency. In addition, he is a Field Training Officer for entry level game wardens and a member of the Boating Cadre. In that capacity he serves as a training officer instructing in boating courses, such as boat and PWC operation, boating firearms and marine tactical, boating accident investigations, boarding procedures, and marine theft. Shires has also developed one- to three-day seminars on electronic surveillance, GPS usage, computer training, and proper metal detector usage. Said VDGIF Director William L. Woodfin, Jr., "Over the years Steve Shires has earned a reputation for excelling at solving complex cases that involve specialized investigation and surveillance skills. And he's taken it a step further by sharing his expertise. We're proud of how he has represented the Department and are pleased he has been selected Game Warden-of-the-Year."

Sergeant Shires has offered training to law enforcement personnel with the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and city and county law enforcement agencies. Chief of VDGIF's Law Enforcement Division Colonel Jeffrey A. Uerz said of



© Ron Messina

Steven M. Shires is named the VDGIF Game Warden-of-the-Year.

Shires, "He works to acquire the latest skills, adapts them to real situations, and then passes those skills on to others, continually improving the caliber of law enforcement in Virginia."

In 1987, Sergeant Shires received an Eastman Kodak Award of Excellence in Law Enforcement Photography. In 1994, he appeared on an episode of a national television show called "Eyewitness Video" as a result of his surveillance work to stop illegal tire dumping in Rockbridge County. In 1995, the U.S. National Forest Service gave him an award for his work with surveillance and electronic tracking techniques that enabled national forest law enforcement officers to stop larcenies that were occurring on their property. He again was recognized for his surveillance work when a

case he had worked was featured on the television program "Real TV" in January 2000.

Shires currently serves on the board of the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council. He is a member of the Crime Line of Rockbridge County. As a hunter education instructor, he has taught more than 4,000 children and adults the importance of safe hunting. Each year he works with the local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. He also has had articles and photographs published in *Virginia Wildlife* magazine, *International Game Warden* magazine, and *Gobbler Tracks* magazine. □

Nongame Tax Checkoff

Help Virginia's wildlife this year by designating a portion or all of your tax refund to the Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program. It is an essential part of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' mission to manage all wildlife and inland fish in the Commonwealth. Contributions from Virginia residents using the State Income Tax Form check box make up 90 percent of all private donations and approximately half of the program's entire budget.

Your voluntary contributions make it possible for the Department to study and gain a better understanding of such diverse animals as the Virginia fringed mountain snail, cliff swallow, oak toad, eastern box turtle, pimpleback mussel, American bald eagle, hoary bat, and eastern chipmunk. There are many animals in Virginia that are considered nongame, including some species of

wildlife that are threatened or endangered.

To contribute, check the Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program box on the 2000 State Income Tax Form and fill in the amount of your donation. If you do not have a refund coming, you can mail a donation to Nongame Wildlife Program, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P. O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104. □

VDGIF 2001 Calendar of Events

March–December: *Boating Education* (Statewide). For information call (804) 367-1125.

March–December: *Hunter Education* (Statewide). For information call (804) 367-1147.

March–June: *Wildlife Mapping* (Statewide). For information call (804) 367-8999.

April 14–May 19: Spring Gobbler Season (Statewide).

April 21: *Women in the Outdoors*, Izaak Walton League Park, Winchester, Va. For information call Carissa Lee (540) 631-0118.

June 8–10: *Becoming An Outdoors-Woman*, Holiday Lake 4-H Camp, Appomattox, Va. For information call (804) 367-6351.

June 14th Deadline: 2001 Kids 'n Fishing Photo Contest. For information call (804) 367-6778.

June 14th Deadline: *James River Fishing Challenge*. For information call (804) 367-8916.

June 23–24: *Wild For Wildlife Days*, 4-H Center, Front Royal, Va. For information call (804) 367-8999.

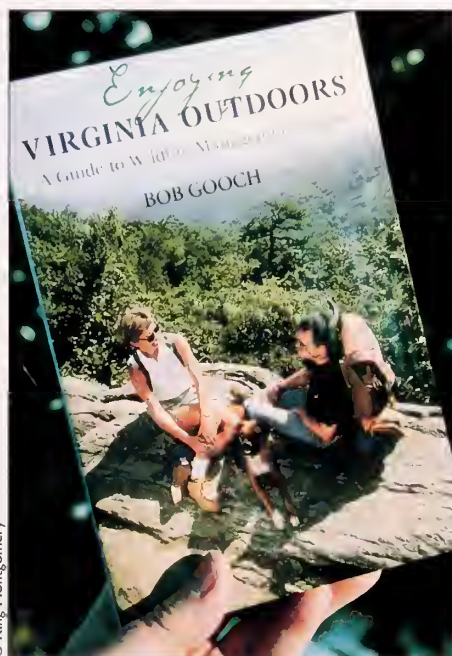
September 14–16: *Virginia Outdoors Family Weekend*, Hungry Mother State Park, Smyth, Va. For information call (804) 367-6351.

September 29: *Women in the Outdoors*, Izaak Walton League Park, Centreville, Va. For information call Linda

Layser (703) 425-6665 or e-mail rglayser@msn.com.

October 5–7: *Virginia Outdoors Woman, Mother Daughter Event, Appomattox, Va.* For information call (804) 367-6351.

Additional information on VDGIF events can be found on the Department Web site at www.dgif.state.va.us. □



“A Guide to Wildlife Management Areas”

reviewed by King Montgomery

Enjoying Virginia Outdoors: A Guide to Wildlife Management Areas
by Bob Gooch,
2000, University Press of Virginia,
238 pages, softcover, \$18.95.

There are few Virginians who know the outdoors in the Old Dominion better than Bob Gooch. He has roamed the state from Virginia's Eastern Shore to the Blue Ridge Mountains and just about everywhere in between. In his travels Bob has hunted, fished, and hiked through much of the Commonwealth. If I had to choose someone to write a comprehensive guide to our Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), it would be Bob Gooch. Bob

has written the definitive guide, and it's a very informative, thorough, and a good-reading book.

With over 180,000 acres of WMA's, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) owns more land than any other state agency including the Department of Forestry and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. These lands range in size from the 429-acre Game Farm Marsh WMA in New Kent County, to the 33,697-acre Goshen-Little North Mountain WMA in Augusta County. Each of VDGIF's 29 WMA's were purchased in part from the generous contributions made by the sportsmen and sportswomen of Virginia, through their hunting and fishing license fees, and money contributed through the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Fund.

Gooch shows us each WMA, what is there, how to get to it, and what you can do once you arrive. Each chapter covers one of the 29 WMA's and includes a map and information about what is available at each facility. The guide also covers information on camping, hiking, birdwatching, wildlife watching, mountain biking, horseback riding, and the traditional field and stream sports of fishing and hunting. All you need to know to enjoy our wildlife management areas is in Gooch's book.

Enjoying Virginia Outdoors: A Guide to Wildlife Management Areas is in bookstores, sporting goods stores, and available through the University Press of Virginia at (804) 924-6064. The book is also available on the Internet at www.amazon.com and www.bn.com. □

**Invest in the Future
Lifetime Hunting and
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**Report Wildlife Violations
1-800-237-5712**



On The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

Navigation Aids



Dwight Dyke

Just as signs, lines, and lights mark the nation's highways, they also mark the nation's waterways. However, they are different and knowledge of one will not help you understand the other. Every boater who ventures out into navigable waters should know and understand the nation's waterway marking system. The term "aids to navigation" includes buoys, daybeacons, lights, lightships, radiobeacons, fog signals, signboards, and various electronic systems to aid the mariner in navigating one's vessel. Aids to navigation (ATONS) are maintained by the Coast Guard except in sole state waters like Lake Anna. In navigable water, such as, the James River, the Coast Guard maintains the ATONS all the way up to Richmond where the river becomes too shallow to navigate.

Just as a solid centerline down the highway means no passing to the motorist, red right returning means when a boater is traveling upstream, they must keep the red buoys on their right. Red and green buoys mark the edges of the channel for the boater just as edgeline striping marks the edge of the pavement for the driver. The big difference is that, in most cases, the driver can clearly see the pavement. The boater cannot usually see the channel, and underwater obstructions. They must rely more heavily on the ATONS to stay out of trouble.

Just to whet your appetite for more knowledge, let's consider the

buoys. If you must keep the red buoys on your right when returning from sea, or going upstream; you realize that you must keep them on your left when going downstream or out to sea. That can confuse you. It seems just when you get used to keeping the red ones on the right, you change course which requires you to switch them over to the left. Practice does resolve the confusion, however.

Aside from their color, buoys have two other means of identification. The green ones are odd numbered and the red ones are even numbered.

At times, the buoy ahead will be so strongly backlighted, you won't be able to see a color or number to identify it. In these cases you will use the third means of identification—shape. Red buoys have a tapered top and are called "nun" buoys. Green buoys have a flat top and are called "cans."

At times it is even easier to identify them because they put a red or green flashing light on top. Look how just this little bit of knowledge can help you out on the water. If you want more, you can read a book or take a course. The knowledge will not only make you safer but add another dimension of fun to your recreational boating. □

For questions or comments, you can reach the author through the Department or by e-mail: jimcrosby@aol.com.

Every boater knows the rule "red right returning," right? How about the solid white centerline down the highway, what does that tell you? I'll bet more readers can answer the second question than the first.

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Perch—Small But Delicious

Whether they're white or yellow, perch are fun to catch and make for excellent eating. Their meat is firm and easily removed after poaching. It can be used in any recipe calling for cooked, flaked fish.

Here's how to poach perch or any other pan fish. Place an inch of water in a large, deep skillet and bring to a gentle boil. Arrange as many perch as your skillet will hold on a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil and turn up edges of wrap. Add 2 tablespoons lemon juice and 2 tablespoons water and then place in skillet. Cover and cook gently for 5 to 10 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Then remove skin and bones and flake fish.

Menu

Artichoke Dip

Perch Casserole

Mixed Greens With Citrus Dressing

Pear-Granola Crisp

Artichoke Dip

¾ cup drained canned artichokes
¼ cup chopped green onions
½ teaspoon crushed garlic
2 ounces blue cheese
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup 2% plain yogurt
Salt and pepper to taste

In food processor, combine all ingredients and process until smooth. Transfer to serving bowl. Refrigerate until ready to use and stir just before serving. Serve with crackers or pita bread pieces. Makes 1 ¼ cups.

Perch Casserole

2 cups cooked, flaked perch or other fish
½ cup butter or margarine
1 ½ cups sliced celery

1 cup chopped onions
2 chicken-flavored bouillon cubes
1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
Salt and pepper to taste
1 ½ tablespoons cornstarch
2 cups milk
1 package (10 ounces) frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
1 can (8 ounces) refrigerated crescent rolls

In a 3-quart saucepan, melt butter and sauté celery, onions, and bouillon cubes over medium heat until tender. Stir in parsley, salt, and pepper. Combine cornstarch and milk; gradually stir into vegetable mixture. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add fish and mixed vegetables; stir until well blended. Pour into a well-greased, 2-quart casserole, 11 x 7 ½ x 1 ¾ inches. Unfold crescent rolls and spread over top of casserole. Bake in a preheated 350° F. oven 20 minutes or until casserole is golden brown and bubbly. Makes 6 servings.

Mixed Greens With Citrus Dressing

⅓ cup honey
⅓ cup orange juice
¼ cup Grey Poupon Dijon Mustard
Mixed greens for 4 to 6 servings

In a small bowl, whisk together honey, orange juice, and mustard. Serve immediately over mixed greens. Dressing can be stored, covered, in refrigerator for up to 1 week. Makes about 1 cup.

Pear-Granola Crisp

4 bosc pears
1 cup granola
⅓ cup flour
½ cup brown sugar, packed
¼ cup butter or margarine, melted
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Peel, slice, and core pears and place in a buttered baking dish. Combine granola, flour, brown sugar, butter, and cinnamon; sprinkle over pears. Bake in a preheated 350° F. oven for 30 to 40 minutes. Makes 6 servings. □

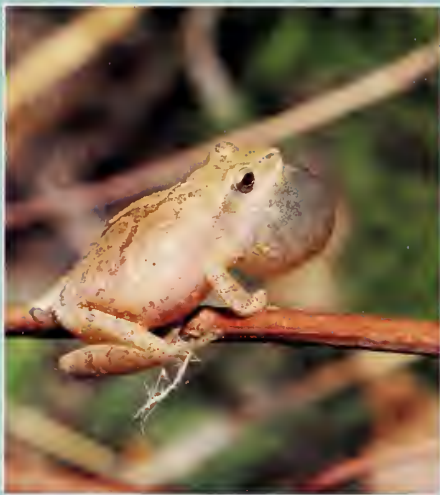


© Dwight Dyke

Wild Backyard

by Marlene A. Condon

Putting in a Small Artificial Pond for Wildlife (Part I)



There are many animals you will not get to see on your property if you do not have a pond where they can live or reproduce. Luckily, it is not difficult to add a water feature to your yard that will bring in frogs, newts, dragonflies, water striders, and many other creatures. This month and next we will discuss putting in a small artificial pond for wildlife.

The easiest way to install a pond is to visit one of the many outlets that sell pre-formed plastic liners that will last about 20 years. These liners come in a variety of sizes and shapes. But first you must survey your property to be sure you have a spot for your pond where you can see it from the house and where it will receive a minimum of four to six hours of sunlight a day (for aquatic plant growth).

Avoid areas near large trees that may shade the pond as well as drop

debris into it. Some debris in the pond is not a serious matter, but too much of it can poison the water as it decays. A small amount of decaying material is useful to frogs and insects that overwinter in the pond (it hides them from predators), but too much of it can deplete the water of oxygen and kill wildlife.

If you have lots of big trees nearby, you may have to check the pond every day or so to scoop out fallen debris. I consider this situation to be a plus rather than a negative. Although you might consider it

“work” to keep the pond surface clean of debris, your reward is a greater intimacy with the animals living underneath the water surface.

You can also place netting above the pond that will catch debris and prevent it from getting into the water. By keeping the netting strung a few inches above the water on support poles rather than weighing it down at the edges, animals that sometimes leave the water will not be imprisoned. Next month we will show you how to really get your hands dirty. ■

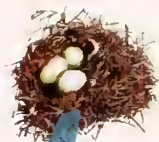


Left: A spring peeper and dragonfly larvae (above) are a few of the creatures one might find living in or along a small artificial pond (right). Photos © Marlene Condon.





Naturally Wild



story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

The Blue-winged Teal

Almost every bird is unique in one way or another. Most waterfowl, like the blue-winged teal, have distinctive colors or flight styles. However, the most notable attribute of this little duck is its traveling itinerary. It is noted for its long journeys in short periods of time. Blue-wings fly to Central and South America into Ecuador, Peru, and Chile to spend the winter. One banded teal flew from Minnesota to Peru in one month—a distance of 4,000 miles. Another flew 7,000 miles across a dozen international bound-

aries in six months! A teal banded in Quebec, Canada was killed 28 days later in British Guinea—2,400 miles away! They migrate from these far-away places to Virginia by late February or early March, on their way to their breeding grounds.

They are quick and active in flight, usually flying in small, compact flocks, twisting and turning, rising, wheeling, and circling. If you watch the marshes in spring you might see a courtship flight of six or seven males chasing a single female in flight, trying to win her favor. It is one of the smallest of our puddle or surface feeding ducks, measuring about 16 inches in length and weighing barely a pound.

They are fairly wary and will often fly

back and forth along a marshy shore before landing. Blue-wings have been clocked at 40-45 miles per hour although, due to their small size, they seem faster. They prefer smaller ponds, freshwater marshes, flooded croplands, and slow moving streams. Blue-wings are mainly surface feeders. Their diet is about 70 percent aquatic vegetation, such as smartweeds, muskgrass, duck weeds, widgeon grass, coontail and pond weeds.

In spring, the drake has a dark, purplish-gray head with a large, white crescent mark in front of its eyes. At this time its underparts are dark, with a pinkish-cinnamon breast marked with round, black spots, and a white flank mark. The hen is generally a buffy or grayish-brown base color with darker brown markings. Both sexes have chalky blue forewings with glossy green and black speculums. This is an important field mark, because in early September, the drakes resemble hens as they begin to come out of molt. They won't achieve their breeding colors again until late November or early December.

Blue-wings breed mainly in the prairie marshlands or marshlands around the Great Lakes region.

They usually nest away from water under clumps of overhanging grass. A common clutch size is 10-12 eggs. Incubation takes 23-27 days and the young are flying in six weeks. The female's call is a high-pitched quack.

The blue-winged teal is among the earliest migrants in fall, actually flocking up as early as late August and early-September. □





Virginia Wildlife 2001 Annual Photography Contest

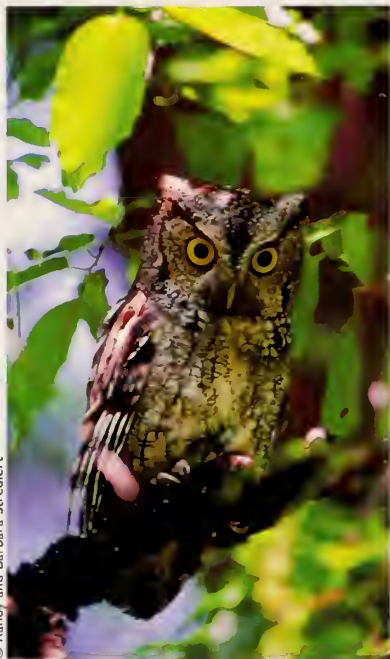
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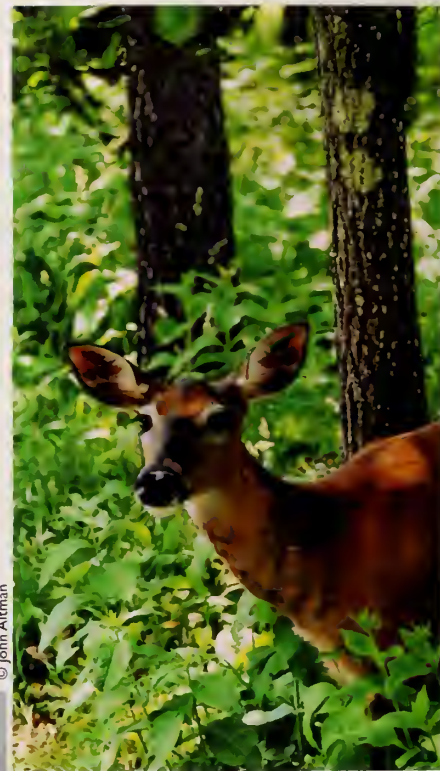
Take up the challenge and join in the thrill of
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This year's contest will have three categories for you to enter, Birds of a Feather, Cold and Clammy Critters, and Fantastic Flowers. First and second place winners in each category will receive prizes donated by the Eastman Kodak Company, third place winners will receive a prize from Richmond Camera. On top of that winners of the 2001 Annual Photography Contest will have their photographs published in the January 2002 issue of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine for all to see.

For additional information and contest rules please send a self addressed, stamped envelope with 34 cents postage to: *Virginia Wildlife Photography Contest*, 4010 West Broad Street, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104 or see our Web site at www.dgif.state.va.us. Deadline for contest submissions is October 26, 2001. Good luck and have fun.



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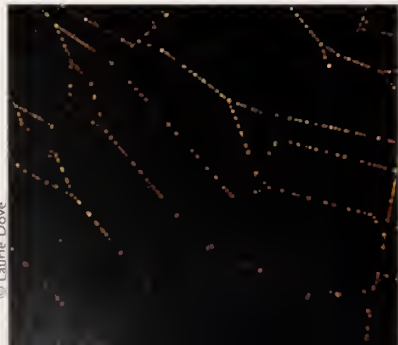
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